

WINNIPEG

“The City Beautiful”



WESTERN CANADA CITY BUILT ALONG BEST LINES OF MUNICIPAL
ART AND ARCHITECTURE. MODERN METHODS MAKE
MANITOBA CAPITAL CONFORM TO HIGH IDEALS
OF CIVIC PRIDE. FIRST CITY OF CANADA
TO APPOINT A CIVIC PLANNING
COMMISSION

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Winnipeg, "The City Beautiful"

WINNIPEG, the capital city of the province of Manitoba, is a fine example of what may be done when the builders of a town take time by the forelock and lead their work along the paths of civic pride and modern city-making. Told in a word the story of Winnipeg is that of a frontier town that has passed through the various stages of villagehood, small cityhood, promising trade centrehood to the partial fulfilment of its manifest destiny as one of the largest and best cities in North America, all in the space of less than forty years. Having a population of 215 in 1870, Winnipeg has 175,000 people living within its city limits to-day and a suburban population of twenty thousand more. In 1875 Winnipeg was, in substance, Fort Garry, a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, in 1911, the city built \$17,550,000 worth of new blocks, banks, residences and structures of all sorts that were in demand. In 1870, there was no such thing as a bank; last year the bank clearings of Winnipeg's twenty-two banks amounted to \$1,172,762,142. These three items of indicated growth tell the story of what has happened in Winnipeg more eloquently than columns of boost talk could display the story and with certitude that mere words must lack, for figures—despite their known reputation for misleading effects—are yet the surest and safest guides to conclusions in the case of public growth and expansion. The business man needs no better signpost to civic development than the increase in population, in building permits, in bank business. In these he reads the story of growth or stagnation, of progress or precarious existence.

But the student of civic growth will inquire how the details have been filled in rather than what general results have been obtained. He will ask how the city to which its citizens point with pride has been built, whether it has good streets, good schools, colleges, churches, parks, street cars, railway facilities, water service, sewer system, street lights and all of the essentials of the modern city as determined by experiment and experience. The speed with which Winnipeg has been built fairly might raise doubts as to the excellence of the methods employed in making a city that is already termed, by common expression, "The Chicago of Canada." Cities of far slower growth have had problems thrust upon them that

have proved too easy to solve and necessary haste too often produces superficial and sketchy effects. It may be said with entire truth, however, that the makers of Winnipeg, past and present, generally have realized the importance of right beginning and careful procedure and a good look ahead to see what new things lie along the horizon. Every error has not been avoided nor every good thing accomplished in Winnipeg, but the men who have had the making of the city in hand for the past forty years have done singularly well in planning and accomplishment.

Winnipeg was incorporated as a city in 1874. Five years before in 1869 the place was so small that Louis Riel, the French half-breed who twice raised a revolt against the Canadian Government captured Fort Garry and lined the greater part of the white male population up in the fort as prisoners. Troops from the east put a sad crimp in Riel's dream of conquest and the setting up of stable government brought settlers into the country so that, in 1874, the erstwhile trading post had nearly two thousand people and took to itself the dignity and form of city government. The agricultural riches of the country tributary to Winnipeg had been kept secret or persistently minimized by the fur traders and it took a bit of time to spread the story of land splendidly fertile and almost illimitable in area. Once started, however, good news does not lose many laps to its reputedly swift rival; bad news, and the fame of the Manitoba wheat country spread fast and far. The snowball of Winnipeg population began to roll about the world and gather to itself increment by thousands. Even without railroads—except a jerkwater arrangement that ran up from St. Paul and Minneapolis in 1880—the city was a drawing card and had 10,000 people when the Canadian Pacific Railway reached Winnipeg in 1882 on its Transcontinental march across Canada. From this time the population rolled up fast. In 1898 Winnipeg had almost 40,000 people and during the five years from 1902 to 1906 the city's population more than doubled, being 48,411 in 1902, and 101,057 in 1906 by a system of counting which surely does not err on the side of exceeding the facts. The directory census taken at the close of 1910 places the present population of Winnipeg at 204,326 and is probably not far from being correct; the rapid taking up of new houses and apartment blocks in the city during the year being, in itself, an indubitable sign of many new people in the city.

All of this flow of population to Winnipeg is of course but a part of a story that applies to all of Western Canada. Attracted by cheap and fertile lands and countless business opportunities, men

and money have streamed into this last West from all parts of the world. Over a hundred thousand farmers from the United States trekked across the line in 1911, bringing with them money and goods to the estimated value of \$100,000,000, and the flow from other countries made up over 200,000 more, although not so well fitted as the men from the States with goods or so well grounded in the science of wheat farming. Winnipeg, standing in the pathway of the progress of the West, grows by the process of absorption and is built up by the force of circumstances over which she has no control but must fit herself to meet as completely as may be.

Thus to fit herself as the chief centre of trade in Western Canada has been no easy task for Winnipeg. Merely to lay out and build the 250 miles of trees which lie within the city limits was no light or inexpensive task. Naturally, prairie soil is not excellent for roads and that about Winnipeg—made up of the vegetable deposits and decay which went on at the bottom of the great inland sea which covered this country for ages—is quite as black, clayey and sticky as any in the world. Excellent for crops, it is the reverse for road purposes and, comparatively without gravel or rocks for road metal, Winnipeg Street builders had resources to asphalt as their chief street-surfacing substance. To make this work as cheap as possible the city established the first municipal owned asphalt plant on the continent and has since done its own work in laying down its asphalt pavements. This is done at a cost of \$2.50 per square yard and granolithic sidewalks are laid down by other city workmen at \$1.80 a square yard. There are miles of asphalt pavement in Winnipeg, and miles of granolithic walks. Other streets have been macadamed—the city owning its stone quarry some twenty miles outside and the civic street department also co-operate closely with like departments of close-lying towns for the betterment of highways that lead into city streets. The chief thoroughfares of Winnipeg—Main Street and Portage Avenue and Broadway—are nearly 150 feet wide, other streets being less in width but of generous and ample proportions, nevertheless Main Street and Portage Avenue are asphalted for their entire width for some miles and Broadway has two asphalted driveways, a double tracked car line and separating boulevards skirting the tracks.

With due care for the city beautiful, the makers of Winnipeg have laid out a big and beautiful system of parks and boulevards. There are 100 miles of boulevarded streets and the city has more than 520 acres in public parks. Every residential street in the city has a boulevard along either side with a row of trees in the

boulevard and, wherever conditions admit, shrubs and larger stretches of clean-kept lawn. Asphalt streets are kept clean by sweeping during the day and by washing at night and the boulevards are also looked after by city employees, employed steadily through the summer at this work. Trees and shrubs grow fast in the rich soil and a tree that is yet comparatively small in size makes a deal of shade because of the dense foliage produced by rich soil at its roots and summer rains and hot sunshine above.

Winnipeg's parks, natural and artificial, are true beauty spots. It is a common conception of a prairie to picture it as a bare naked stretch of land, and this is true of much of it. Around about Winnipeg, however, there is a deal of "bush" and many inequalities of surface, largely due to the two rivers—the Red and Assiniboine—that runs through the city. Along these rivers are many fine trees, in some spots a good many acres being covered by a splendid growth of poplar, elm and oak. The Winnipeg City Park lies along the banks of the Assiniboine River, covers 286 acres of land and is beautiful in its natural and artificial effects.

The rest of Winnipeg's 520 acres of public parks are divided into smaller enclosures scattered about the city and conveniently located for the people of the several sections. All are well provided with trees, shrubbery and open spaces and afford the public pleasant loitering places and—in the larger parks—room for games to be played. Winnipeg has put upwards of \$1,000,000 into purchase and care of its public parks and the money has been exceedingly well spent.

Winnipeg is long on municipal ownership. The city owns nearly everything in the way of public service functions, except the street railway and telephones and the latter are under governmental ownership of the province of Manitoba. The street railway is operated by a home company and gives excellent service especially when the extremely rapid growth of the city is taken into account. Street cars were first run in Winnipeg—by horse power—in 1882. There is no record of how many passengers were carried the first year but 41,000,000 were carried in 1911, an increase over the previous year of 10,000,000 and 27,000,000 over the year 1905. During workmen's hours—morning and evening—tickets that sell at the rate of eight for 25 cents are good, children of any school age ride at 2½ cents a fare and six tickets for 25 cents is the highest tariff except a five cents cash fare. Transfers are issued on a basis of great liberality and the rolling stock of the road is equal to the best on the continent.

Winnipeg gets its aqueduct water from artesian wells and ob-

tains in this way a supply of almost absolutely pure water and in quantity that has been sufficient so far. There is now a movement toward a greater supply to be taken from another source, and of quality and quantity to meet all the city's needs present and future. The public water service is supplemented by a high pressure service with 8 miles of mains in the centre of the city for fires. Water for this purpose is taken from the Red River and delivered under pressure that may be run up to 300 pounds in a few minutes after an alarm has been sent in.

Winnipeg has 190 miles of sewers which empty into the Red River, a stream of great volume and rapid movement especially in the spring when the winter's accumulation of snow and ice swells the rivers of the north and makes a spring cleaning of everything in their channels. In the early days typhoid fever was a prevalent disease but an active and efficient Board of Health has made the city practically clean of epidemic ailments and has made Winnipeg one of the healthiest in the world with a death rate of 11.09 per thousand for 1910.

At the very peak of Winnipeg's system of public ownership is the great hydro-electric plant which the city has completed at Point du Bois, on the Winnipeg River. This plant is now in active service delivering current for lighting and power to citizens at cost, or in other words at a reduced price of 300 per cent. less than was in force in 1910, and is one of the largest of its kind in the world. It will eventually furnish 60,000 horsepower, as planned, and is capable of further development up to 100,000 horsepower. Winnipeg has invested \$4,000,000 in this plant and regards the outlay as wise and economical. The plant is located about 77 miles from Winnipeg at a point where the Winnipeg River has a natural fall of 32 feet. This fall has been increased to 47 feet and damming the river has produced a storage reservoir that has an area of 6,000 square acres, the river draining some 50,000 square miles to the point of location of the Winnipeg power plant. The plant has been fitted with the highest type of hydro-electric machinery that can be produced and no expense or trouble spared to give the plant the great efficiency possible to obtain.

All of this trouble and expense seems to be warranted by industrial conditions in Western Canada. Formerly with small need for manufactured goods and for many years too busily engaged in developing its magnificent agricultural resources, Western Canada has to-day an enormous demand for all kinds of manufactured goods together with comparatively small means of supplying these needs from home sources. Broadly speaking, Western

Canada's great trade is supplied from outside sources—Eastern Canada, United States, Great Britain and Continental Europe. A new era is at hand, however, and the West will figure more and more largely in supplying its own market with home made goods. Winnipeg has been from the start a great distributing point for Western Canada. The wholesale trade that proceeds from this city now amounts to more than \$120,000,000 a year and the power plant proposition is calculated to push Winnipeg a long way forward as a supply point of manufactured goods made more than 1,000 miles nearer the market than is now the case. Winnipeg has already made substantial progress towards the high point in Western Canada industrial activities. There are 276 factories in the city, employing 15,500 hands. In 1901 the value of Winnipeg's factory output was placed by the Dominion census authorities at \$8,606,248. Five years later the figures were increased by the same authority to \$18,983,290. Official figures for 1911 are not obtainable, at this writing, but the Winnipeg Industrial Bureau after a careful canvas have placed the value at \$36,600,000. Splendid opportunities for establishing new industries on the basis of cheap power, and sharp demand, are bringing new factories to Winnipeg steadily, and so often that the West is taking over its new status as an industrial section with speed and finish. Of course the new power plant is supplying Winnipeg with light and power for domestic purposes as well as serving the larger purposes of increasing the city's facilities for making Winnipeg one of the best street lighted cities in America.

For the rest, Winnipeg has excellent schools, churches of all denominations that are well attended at all times of the year, the best theatres west of Toronto, and is generally equipped as a good place for residence and business purposes. The apartment blocks of the city are as good as any in the world and far better than can be found usually in a city of 200,000 population. Forty apartment blocks were built last year and the total number in Winnipeg is now over 200, ranging in cost from \$20,000 to \$400,000. There are some sixty hotels in Winnipeg, the Royal Alexandra ranking with the extra good hosteleies of the world, and the new "Fort Garry" Hotel under construction will fully equal the former in elegance and comfort, and it may be said in general that private interests have been scarcely less well cared for in this new city than public duties have been performed.

Few cities have better railway facilities than have come to Winnipeg during the last quarter of a century. Five great systems have divisional headquarters here and are making great progress

each year in covering Western Canada with a complete net work of main and branch roads. Winnipeg is now the biggest wheat market on the Continent, and the dealings of the Grain Exchange of the City are rated as heavy as any in the world.

All of this—a conservative statement of how a big city is being made sixty miles north of the International boundary—would be remarkable even if the period of time taken for what has been done were twice as long as it really is. Taken as the case actually stands, the story of Winnipeg is little short of marvellous; so very little short, indeed, that it has great attraction for those who hear it or read it. The Winnipeg Industrial Bureau—an organization composed of the leading business men and trade bodies of the city—answers thousands of inquiries each year, over 20,000 in 1911—and distributes its literature all over the world—1,500,000 pieces last year.

Thus, home interest is supplemented by interest abroad and the two working in conjunction have produced in Winnipeg a Canadian City built upon the best lines laid down by the world's community builders: a city so very like the most up-to-date American cities that the traveller from the States feels very much at home in Winnipeg, so much so, that there are no less than 20,000 Americans living in Winnipeg, many of them engaged in business in a very large way. Ask any business man in Winnipeg for information about his city and he will immediately direct you to the new Permanent Exposition Building on Main Street, where the Winnipeg Industrial Bureau have their general offices and where the products of the city's leading industries are on exhibition as well as a complete showing of the vast natural resources of Western Canada.

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